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CHILDREN IN AMERICAN STREET TRADES

BY MYRON E. ADAMS,

West Side Neighborhood House, New York City.

Although the method of distributing the daily papers may seem to vary in different cities the means remain ever the same. The newsboy has always been regarded as indispensable for securing a satisfactory delivery or distribution. The purpose he serves is so evident, his place in the system seems so determined by necessity, that much thought has been given to the labor, but very little to the laborer. In truth the public has grown to look upon him as one of the factors in everyday life, able to care for himself and to work out his own salvation. That some do this there is no doubt. The newsboys who have gone from the street into business and even into larger affairs of state and of the nation refer with pride to the road over which they have traveled.

The newsboy has become a part of our city environment. A familiar figure, rather undersized as we know him best, flipping the street cars, or standing on street corners holding his stock in trade under his arm. A veritable merchant of the street, who scans each passer-by as a possible customer. Quick of wit and intent upon his trade he reads their peculiarities at a glance, and makes the most of their weaknesses. The public sees him at his best and neglects him at his worst. He is not considered in the problem of child labor, because he works in the open and is seemingly apart from the associations which are so hostile to the health and happiness of the factory child.

It seems the part of the iconoclast to controvert the popular conception of the newsboy. His energy and enthusiasm in the few hours when his work is at its best add to the picturesque in the city's life; his sacrifice and his service have always been the peculiar field of the melodrama or the boy's story book. It is very hard to throw these early impressions ruthlessly aside. This class of boys

have the ability to do things which attract and to conceal those things which repel.

Undoubtedly in the early days of paper selling and before the child of foreign parents secured such a monopoly of street trades, there were some features of paper selling which were more attractive than they are to-day. With the changing character of the street there has also come the realization that the ordinary boy has little or no future there. The opportunity for him in the business of the paper is small. In fact the uncertainty and license of the street provides but a poor education for any occupation which requires either regular or persistent effort.

With the demand for more effective restriction of child labor and with compulsory education laws the fact has become obvious that the laborer on the street is one of the chief offenders against these laws. Investigations conducted by persons familiar with the problem have disclosed the fact that while street trading offered temptations to which the street boy was particularly susceptible, there has been little or no attempt to regulate and improve existing conditions.

It has also been noticeable that similar conditions prevail in most American cities. The dangers of the street trades are not limited to the great cities of the East, but are equally true of the western cities and of the smaller cities throughout the country. This matter has been more carefully considered in our great cities, and we shall take as the best illustration of the general dangers of street trading those found in the city of Chicago.

Chicago is particularly fortunate in the character of its street trades. Many forces have combined in the newspaper industry to make possible a system of distribution, which, both in simplicity and completeness, excels that of most of American cities. A system has been gradually developed in Chicago which excludes many of the deplorable tendencies in other cities. This allows the paper to pass from the publisher to the reader with the least possible waste of time or energy, and insures in the case of many of its workers the establishment of newspaper selling as an industry. The industrial possibilities have been largely due to the practical interest that the Chicago papers have taken in the newsboy, and in the development of a regular and methodical system of paper selling. This interest has not merely been evident in the desire to give some pleas-

ure to the newsboy, by means of gymnasium, drill-halls and other forms of practical helpfulness, but also, to a much greater degree, in the attempt to put the work on a basis that would insure him a business and a regular livelihood.

Chicago is mapped out by carefully defined boundaries into "routes," assigned to men known as "route carriers." A wagon representing each paper covers these routes, not once, but several times during the day. At regular points along the route the driver is met by the men who are owners of the routes. These men are often accompanied by boys, waiting for a supply of papers for house to house delivery, and for sale on street corners in residence districts. They are the news dealer's assistants, and as a rule prove themselves reliable as well as prompt. In fact the competition for this employment is so keen that the boy must "hustle" or another will be given the coveted position.

In the early phases of newspaper selling the street corner in the downtown district was the scene of physical battles for supremacy. For many years the Irish lad held absolute possession. With strong fist and ready tongue, backed by many friends, he seemed almost invincible, but back of it all there was a certain lack of persistence that proved to be his undoing. The Jewish boy came next. He would not fight the Irish lad with the weapons of his choosing, he knew a better way. Every day he was at his post, in winter and summer, in good weather and bad, the customer could depend on his appearance with the paper. So his trade increased, and at last he gained a monopoly of the corner. In turn he fell, and the Italian, the prince of street venders, because he possessed both of the strong points of his predecessors, secured the monopoly of most of the good corners. He was both a ready fighter and a persistent worker.

Meanwhile the circulation managers of the newspapers came into the field with assurance of assistance to him who possessed the corner. The corner, which had been merely a prize for a physical contest, now came to have a quasi-legal position that implied pecuniary value. Its value was so great that it could not pass unnoticed by the circulation managers, and protection of some sort seemed necessary. The social privilege must have a more stable backing than merely the "good will" of the street. Protection finally came from the newspaper in the form of a card bearing the name of the dealer and the position of his corner, with the condition that no

one could buy early papers without presenting this card. In this way they were able to regulate the transfer of the corner. "For, while they did not often interfere with the transfer of a corner from one boy to another, if they knew him to be in the pay of another paper, or if they suspected that he was getting possession of a number of corners in order to speculate on them, or to hold a monopoly, they did not give him a card." This protection gives the dealers confidence in their position, and inspires them to be both regular in their trade and courteous to customers if they would establish a business.

The plan which was so well adapted to the downtown district was established on a more liberal scale throughout the city. The principal corners in the outlying districts were occupied by so-called "Canadian" boys, a title often given to the dealer who delivers papers to the smaller boy, and who controls the circulation in his district. The dealers are empowered by the papers to arrange the territory each boy is to cover. Some of these boys receive a small salary from the newspapers, others are dependent upon the small sum which they derive from the sub-letting of their districts, and they manage to earn a very fair salary when they combine the actual selling of papers with their other duties. Among the men and boys who own corners outside the downtown district there is a great divergence, both in age and nationality, but the boy finally chosen as overseer is usually the best representative of the district in which he lives.

In addition to this selling on the street corner many of the older boys have established regular routes, which often require the delivery of five or six hundred papers each day. One young man who has a route of this kind has been able to secure an education by means of selling papers. He finally graduated from High school and from a medical college, received a degree, and practiced medicine for two years, yet he still continued with the old route and depended upon it chiefly for support. Many instances came to the notice of investigators of persons who had in this way earned a living while pursuing a scientific or professional course.

In return for the social and business privilege the agent assumes the responsibility for the circulation of the paper on his corner, or in his district. He promises that each paper shall have an equal amount of attention at his hands, and none shall be favored either in posi-

tion or method of sale. As long as the bargain is kept he is given perfect liberty and remains secure in his position. If the bargain is broken there are forces in reserve that operate to his undoing.

The business in its development required that some one be constantly at the stand. In the morning one newsboy, or at the most, two are necessary, for the trade in the morning is comparatively dull. This is due to the fact that most of those who come to the city on suburban trains have already purchased their papers before arriving in the city, and those who live in the city have either obtained a copy at their homes or are too busy to read them at their places of business. On the west side few boys are on the street before 6 a. m., except those who have regular routes. A father was found delivering papers at 5 a. m. with his three little daughters assisting, but as a general rule throughout the city comparatively few people are engaged in the sale of morning papers. In the afternoon, from three to seven o'clock, many of the corner men have from one to a dozen or more assistants, who receive either a percentage of their sales or a small salary. This is the so-called "hustler" system, and the newspapers claim that it is "simply an excrescence, and apparently a temporary one." The new child-labor law in Illinois forbids the employing of boys under fourteen years of age, but the dealer can easily avoid this technicality by changing wages into commission, the boy will then be working for himself.

The privilege of position, and the regularity of sales necessarily develops a fixed value for the corner, which ranges from \$100 to \$500. The four corners of Clark and Madison streets are estimated by their owners to be worth \$2,000. None of the corner men earn less than \$1 a day, and many earn from \$5 to \$10. All this proves that it is possible for the city to make a helpful industry out of a trade which has been long considered irregular and desultory. If legislation is needed for this class it is only that there may be greater security in the business which they now hold as a privilege and not as a legal right. Many of the dealers desire this, as there is always some uncertainty in their continued possession of a corner.

The news dealers have already felt the need of association and co-operation. The Chicago Newsboys' Protective Association was organized in March, 1902. It does not seek to monopolize the newspaper trade, and is quite satisfied with its membership of 200, which

was not more than 5 per cent. of the newsboys of Chicago. It is not a union and has no power as such, and since the members do not work for wages, it is not eligible for membership in the American Federation of Labor. It was formed originally when the city was making a campaign against the street venders, driving both fruit stands and news stands off the street, and compelling the news dealers to carry their papers under their arms, thus cutting off their sales to a considerable extent. The association which was then formed to present the cause of the newsboys to the City Council secured the successful passage of an act that allowed them to keep stands. After this success they did not disband, but continued to meet the first Wednesday of each month to improve the general conditions under which they work, and also to provide for those among their number who may be prevented by sickness or any other cause from plying their trade.

Three incidents may illustrate the nature of their activities. It was reported in one of their meetings not long ago that some dissatisfaction had been expressed with the condition in which the men left their boxes on the street when their day's work was finished. As a result a committee was appointed to wait on the different members of the association and see that proper care was taken of the boxes during the day, and to insist that they be removed from the street at night.

A blind member of the association was much troubled by small boys, who stole his papers, and in every way tried to ruin his business. The matter was reported to the association, who appointed a committee, serving with pay, to investigate the matter and report. As a result of the efforts of the committee there has been little or no trouble since.

This association also helps those among its number who are sick, although on account of the very small amount of monthly dues they are not able to guarantee this assistance. A cripple received \$24 from the association during a four months' illness, and could have secured more had he not been determined to refuse further aid.

There is, however, a large and growing class, who deserve the attention of both the city and the citizen. The business of selling papers in Chicago is so systematized that the vagrant cannot prosper, and yet the "vagrant" was in its midst. He was found on State

street at eleven o'clock on a Saturday night, with one paper under his arm, not attempting to sell the paper, but using it as a bait to beg from the passersby. He was found in the "American" News alley, sometimes fifty, sometimes a hundred strong, sleeping on bags, under boxes, or on the floor of the newspaper restaurant. With this boy, and with all those who are obviously too young to be permitted to engage in street trading, it is our duty to deal, if we are to preserve the attitude the American city takes toward the dependent child.

Three classes of persons who add little to the general circulation, while detracting much from the tone of the business, and working a real injury to themselves, are engaged in selling newspapers, these are the small boy, the semi-vagrant boy and the young girl.

An investigation of 1,000 newsboys, ranging in age from five to twenty-two, showed that out of this number, 127, or 12 per cent. were under ten years of age. Among the number there were forty-two Italians, twenty-five Americans, twenty-four Germans, sixteen Irish and eight Jews. One hundred and six had both parents living, and only twenty-one had lost either father or mother. Their aggregate earnings were \$41.40 per day, or an average earning of thirty-two cents per day, for which they worked three and one-half hours daily.¹

The small boy, under ten years of age, is on the ragged edge of the newspaper business. He may aid the corner dealer somewhat, and serves his purposes very well, but he is not a necessary part of the circulation system. His absence would not materially affect the general sale of the papers, since there are news stands in charge of older boys on practically every corner, but would preserve the small boy from the temptations which easily lead to a system of begging. The younger boy seems to learn early the strategic way of disposing of his wares. Three boys were found begging on State street between eleven and twelve o'clock one night. Each boy carried a paper under his arm, but made no attempt to sell it. They would watch each passerby and without exception select a man accompanied by a lady. As soon as the man's attention was attracted by the paper the boy would ask for money, and continue to do so until he either received the money or had been refused many times. One boy (T. P.), received fifteen cents in less than

¹ Statistics at end of article.

a half hour. When questioned, he stated that all the younger boys remaining on the street after ten o'clock did the same thing.

If the small boy is to earn very much, particularly in the downtown district where he is most in evidence, he must work in connection with some corner man, who controls a considerable distance each side of the stand, or he must wander about the street picking up a customer where opportunity offers. These boys are selected at random, without reference to school attendance, in fact selling newspapers is at the base of much truancy. The corner man exploits the small boy because he needs some one to help him in the busy hours, and often to take the stand when he goes home at night. The corner man disposes of his unsold papers at a reduced rate to one of these small boys when the best selling hours of the day are passed, since some of the evening papers are not returnable. The corner man prefers to stand the small loss rather than spend the long tedious hours late in the evening to dispose of them, but the small boy will often stay downtown in the chance of selling them. On the evening of September 13, 1903, W. S., a newsboy, aged seven, was taking care of a stand at 11.30 p. m., and probably did not leave the place before midnight. The small boy is also very useful in the sale of papers on the street cars, for he does not hesitate to jump on and off when they are at full speed, and in this way secures many customers who would otherwise be lost. Those who have investigated the matter state that the constant jumping on and off the cars is injurious to the boy. "Flipping" the street car is but a step to the freight and express trains, easily accessible and going far out to the country and to other cities, and this combined with irregular hours and uncertain income are the chief means of training the boy for vagrancy.

The newsboy in many instances is exploited by parents, who find that the boy can earn as much in a few hours as the father can in a day, and in consequence see little need that both should work. To a peasant from Southern Europe, who has been compelled to work for weeks to secure the small returns of a scanty crop, the earnings of his young child upon the fertile fields of the street seem incredibly large. He has no means of judging the harm which may come to his boy or girl, and quite naively reckons that his little children can earn more than himself. The fact that his child is deprived of school, learns no regular trade and is distracted in mind and

stunted in growth, naturally does not appeal to him, seeing as he does only the gain of the day. The child of such a parent can be protected only by law.

It is sometimes asserted that children under ten years of age, if not engaged in street trading, would lounge about in idleness and mischief. It must, however, be remembered that the truancy law requires the attendance of all such children at school. It would certainly seem better if only to secure a normal physical development that these children should play about the street, around their homes, in the playgrounds or in the crowded downtown district at the Chicago Boy's Club, which is conducted exclusively for the boys of the street, than that they should share in the intense life of street trading.

Nor is it right to characterize as idleness the play of a child of ten after five hours' application in the public school, since play has been recognized as one of the most important factors in the physical and mental development of child life. Anyone familiar with the necessities of child life in the tenement districts understands that the street is the playground for the child. It ought to be emphasized here that there is a well-known difference in the physical and moral influences surrounding street trading in the downtown district with all the freedom from external control either on the part of city or parent, as compared with the conditions of street play within the neighborhood in which the child lives where the restrictions of home and friends are able to influence to some measure his conduct.

The suggestion which may occur to the casual reader, that the newsboy under ten years of age, prohibited from trading on the street, would be deprived of a very important part of his support, is not sustained by the facts obtained during the investigation. Only a very small number of these children are from dependent families. A careful investigation of the records of the Charity Organization Society shows that of the 1,000 newsboys investigated, the names of but sixteen families are found, and of these sixteen, eight applied for the privilege of a vegetable garden, of the remaining eight only four received direct help, such as coal, clothing or food.

Few of these children are even half orphans; of those under ten years of age, twenty-one out of 127. Many do not contribute to their own support or that of the family. In certain instances

children were found to be the chief support of a family, but even in these cases it would be much better for the city to assist in supporting the family now, than to be compelled later to pay the price of a ruined character and a criminal life. The following paragraph illustrates the point in question:

There are two families bearing the same name, related to each other, one living on East, the other West Taylor street, who have been known to the different children's societies for many years. Ever since the Juvenile Court has been established one or more members of these two families have been before the court every three or four months. Every male member of the West side family has been in the John Worthy School. One of the boys is now at Pontiac, to remain until he is twenty-one, the third son sells papers on the street, but seldom goes to his home. He can be found almost any night, late, loafing around the American Newspaper restaurant, where he gets his meals and sleeps on the floor. The youngest member of this family has been sent to the Parental School. The father is dead, the mother demented, and all the money that has gone to the support of the family has been earned in the newspaper trade.

Some children sell papers through the coercion of selfish parents. During the investigation, a well-dressed Italian was seen standing on the corner of Adams and State streets watching his three sons selling papers. The three boys, aged respectively, fourteen, ten and eight, earned jointly \$2 a day. The father stood by to prevent any investigation of their earnings or school attendance, yet there seemed to be no desire on his part to participate in their labors. In the majority of cases the boys do not have the protection, even of the fathers, but are left to the mercy of the street.

The investigation disclosed the fact that the newsboy is peculiarly subject to dangers of this sort. He is the only working child whose occupation offers an excuse for remaining on the street at night, while apparently pursuing a legitimate industry. Although the city is full of unscrupulous men, it is toward the newsboy that such a man may most easily hold the advantage of an employer of boys under fourteen. Besides this he has an opportunity of employing boys who are already enervated by irregular hours, improper food, and where sense of decency in many cases has been broken down by life on the street at all hours of day or night. Instances of this kind are of frequent occurrence, although they are seldom

made public. The police have direct evidence that a newsdealer, who had a prosperous corner on Halsted street, hired eight young boys, working for him at a percentage of one cent for five papers sold. This man required the boys to come to his room to receive their pay, and there committed violence on each of the eight boys, most of whom were under fourteen years of age. A newsboy who was brought to the John Worthy School was found to be suffering from disease. An investigation instituted by Mr. Sloan disclosed the facts as stated above. The case never came up in the courts, as the man disappeared from the city when he discovered that there was such damaging evidence against him and the authorities have been unable to find him.

Mr. Sloan, the superintendent of the John Worthy School, authorizes the statement, that "One third of the newsboys who come to the John Worthy School have venereal disease, and that 10 per cent. of the remaining newsboys at present in the Bridewell, are, according to the physician's diagnosis, suffering from similar diseases."

The newsboy, as well as the messenger boy, and American District Telegraph boy, on account of his availability is frequently found in the "red light" district, and as a messenger boy for men and women of dissolute character, learns the very worst side of the city's life. He knows many of the professional prostitutes by name, and has become attached to them by presents of fruit and candy.

Mr. Sloan also states, that "The newsboy who comes to the John Worthy School is, on the average, one-third below the ordinary boy in development physically." This is to be accounted for by irregular days and sleepless nights. The strongest under these conditions cannot long hope to compete with the boy who has a normal amount of sleep and who does not lack for proper food at regular intervals. If boys under ten are required to rise at 4.30 or 5 a. m., they have been under four and one-half hours' excitement and labor before entering school, where for five hours they are to be engaged in more or less mental effort. Then many of the boys distribute papers by the route system in the morning, also sell papers in the evening, beginning in such instances the labor and excitement of their trade immediately upon leaving school, lasting for an average time of three hours, making a total daily activity of over twelve hours.

The physical danger of the child varies with his age. We must not and cannot treat him like a man, for the youthful organism is particularly susceptible to physical abuse. The excitement of the street stimulates unnatural desires on the part of the boy. He sees the men about him participating in questionable pleasures and soon learns to follow their example with disastrous results to himself.

No better illustration of the results of the irregular life that many of the newsboys lead could be given than that of G., an Italian boy, who lay dying a few weeks ago in a West Side hospital. G. left his home in Italy before he was quite seven years old, and in company with an older brother, came to Chicago twelve years ago. They secured a downtown corner, in a good location, and were soon earning enough for their own support, as well as that of the family in Italy. After they had been here for several years the older brother returned to his native land to bring over two more brothers to help out in the trade. Business was good, and as G. grew to manhood he began to find various amusements for his leisure hours. During the slack hours of the day the younger brothers could easily take care of the stands, and G. formed associates that led him into the worst forms of vice. A contracted disease sent him across the ocean to the home in Italy, in the hope that the sea voyage and the air of his native hills would renew his strength. In less than a year he was back at his old stand. One of the younger brothers had gone wrong, had been sent to the John Worthy School, and the elder brother was employed as a driver on a route for one of the big daily papers. The old stand demanded now long hours of exhaustive work. Wrecked by disease as he was, he proved ill-fitted to withstand the rigors of a Chicago winter on the open street. Before spring he was brought to the hospital. The physician who examined him said, "The old story; whiskey and disease, lack of proper food, the constant exposure, they have all done their work. His span of life had been brief and the price he had to pay for its meager pleasures high. Dying at nineteen. The pitiful part is the waste and useless expenditure."

Among the 1,000 newsboys examined, there were 75.1 per cent. who came under the compulsory education law. Of these, 662 gave the name of some school they were attending. Subsequent investigation of the information thus given proved the statements to be

generally true. It was found, however, that in many cases their attendance was so irregular as to amount to truancy.

Authorities on truancy agree that the street trades are the chief support and resource of truant children; requiring practically no capital, and demanding no recommendation, they are open to all alike.

In the minds of the parents who have little or no education themselves, the school is naturally made subordinate to the pecuniary gain of the child in selling papers, even if at times it is a mere pittance. The boy is made to feel at an early age that his value is determined by the money he can earn on the street. The school is the place that demands his time for some of the best hours in the day. He cannot see the relation between the school and his daily trade, and in most cases he assumes that the school is his enemy. To the boy accustomed to the street, school soon becomes irksome. The freedom of life appeals to him, the very busy hours are soon over and there is time for loafing and idling with other and older boys, and it is in such idle hours as these that the vices that are later to prove the ruin of the boy are contracted. The secretary of the probation court officers states that "there are one hundred and forty-three newsboys in charge of the officers of that court," and adds, that "the first offense of almost every boy that she has had to deal with has been truancy."

The boy who is out at four, or even earlier, in the morning either to deliver papers on a route, or to sell on a corner, is breaking into hours of sleep that the young and growing body is much in need of. The energy expended in the first spurt of selling or delivering his papers leaves him unfitted for the school room when he reaches there at nine o'clock, the reaction sets in, the body demands rest, and the quiet monotony of the school room is in such marked contrast to that of the street full of life and motion that the study of books seems more than ever a drudgery, and the desire to get away from it more than ever intense.

In Chicago the large proportion of papers are sold outside of school hours. The morning papers are generally of little value after nine o'clock, and the afternoon editions are mostly in demand after three o'clock, so that the school boy has no legitimate excuse for being on the street during the time school is in session. During the day, however, the truant boy could get the early edition of the

American at 9.15, the twelve o'clock edition of the *News* at ten o'clock; at 1.30 the three o'clock *News* and five o'clock *American*; and at 2.30 the five o'clock *News* and night edition of the *American*, all of which come within school hours.

Gaming is unquestionably a most common vice among newsboys. Selling newspapers does not make the boy gamble, and it cannot be said that gambling is peculiar to newsboys, yet here the opportunities seem largest. Where money is ready at hand and more is to be easily had, its value is seldom recognized. It is very easy for the boy to "chance it" with the hope of greater gain, when at various times during the day and night he is brought in contact with many boys who are likewise inclined. Gambling in the downtown district takes various forms. "Shooting pennies" is the most common, although "craps" takes a large part of the earnings. In this way the income of the whole day may pass through the hands of a number of boys in a few moments.

A Juvenile Court officer, who investigated the case of sixty newsboys, found that fifty-two out of the sixty did not assist in the support of their families. Another officer says, that "most of the boys under twelve years of age sell papers for spending money, and bring little of it to the house." The money earned and spent in such a way can necessarily have very little value to the boy, and as an educational factor would prove of greater harm than usefulness in determining his subsequent career.

The racing form and "stable-boys racing tips" in sealed envelopes can be found on most of the news stands, although Chief O'Neill has given orders to the police officers to confiscate them whenever found on the corner stands. This stopped the sale for a short period, but at the present time they are much in evidence. The boy becomes familiar in his business with the processes and equipment of gaming, he sees the corner man participating in the great game of chance and sees no reason why he should not do likewise. He learns very readily to play "policy," a game that gives the chance to win very large amounts at a very small outlay. When once the boy has selected the winning numbers, however, the die is cast, after that a large portion of his earnings go to the game.

The Harlem race track is a Mecca for many of the betting newsboys in the downtown district. They learn the betting game on the street. They find the large opportunity on the race course

where they can sell their papers, racing forms and programs at a much greater price than elsewhere. They do not stop here, however, but make their pools on the races, and even bet with the book-makers, if they can find some one to place their bets for them. This is particularly true of the younger element of the Americanized Italians and Jews. They have caught the betting spirit, it is the frequent subject of their conversation and costs them no small part of their earnings. Saturday, September 12th, the investigators found from thirty to forty boys selling papers at Harlem, some at the gate, others on the betting floor.

The semi-vagrant is present in the business of selling newspapers because he finds here the easiest way to earn money to sustain his irregular life. During the first three weeks in September, the alley in the rear of the *Chicago American* was visited no less than seven times, by different persons interested in the investigation, and on each occasion there were at least forty and sometimes seventy-five boys, many of them under fourteen years of age. They are smoking cigarettes, eating, sleeping, fighting or "shooting crap," towards morning the most of them will be found sleeping on the floor waiting for the morning editions. Some of these vagrants are foreigners, but a large number are American born, runaways from this and other cities, making their headquarters at this place, sure of a welcome on the restaurant floor. There are no class distinctions here, white and black, American and foreigner, share the same lot. The vagrant can live on fifteen cents a day if he chooses. A cup of coffee, all the bread he can eat, and a stew, to be had for five cents. If he is more fastidious, a bed can be secured in the neighborhood of West Madison street for five cents, making a total daily expenditure of twenty cents. Even the youngest newsboys earn more than this without any great effort, and many of these semi-vagrants, or "sleepouts," earn from a dollar to two dollars a day. By selling extras on the side street some of the older boys earn a dollar in a few hours, and yet these same boys were seen on several successive nights sleeping out in the alley.

The question naturally arises, where does the money go? The answer can be found in the training of the street boy for gambling, and that period of inertia which follows the possession of money when the boy refuses to work as long as he has the means of sustenance. A very small percentage of the earnings, either at the

corner stand or on the street, finds its way to the home or to some useful purpose. In News alley the earnings change hands many times a day, "easy comes, easy goes," seems to be the power that animates the boy vagrant, and it certainly gives him a chance to learn the most dangerous side of life.

Probably no one familiar with juvenile delinquency can seriously doubt that any child that tires of parental or school restraints can go downtown to borrow or beg a "stake," and by joining a "gang," live the exciting and ever-degrading life of the streets. The immediate cost of this pernicious license falls most heavily upon the families of the foreign poor. There is no story more tragic in the annals of life in Chicago than the break between the American boy of foreign parentage and his tenement home. The foreigner's child, even though born abroad, after two years in the public school, is to all intents and purposes an American, while his parents remain European peasants. The mother quite probably speaks no English, and the father just enough to understand his Irish foreman. The boy learns to discount his parents' ignorance, and they misunderstand and half fear his strange new world wisdom. The boy, becoming impatient of their restraint, runs away, sleeps out a night or two, maintains himself by selling papers, likes the license and excitement of the street life, and his home knows him no more. He is now easy game for the experienced vagrant or sneak thief.

A typical case, taken from the records of the Chicago Municipal Lodging House, is that of Peter X. He was found about two in the morning, on one of the coldest days of last winter, sleeping in News Alley. In the morning at the Municipal Lodging House, he claimed that he had no home, was an orphan boy and had come to Chicago from Milwaukee. Later he was persuaded to tell the truth, which was to the effect that he lived on West Ohio street, and was a truant from home. A visit to his home discovered that Peter was the eldest of a family of five, recently emigrated from Italy. It was the old story of the break between new world wisdom and old world restraints. Peter had not been home for six weeks.

The effect of the license of the street in this case was to take from this peasant home its most educated and capable member, and to give to the downtown "kip outs" a new recruit. So far from adding to the family maintenance he shirked his duty.

Girls have long been selling papers in Chicago, so long indeed

that the fact seems to have passed unnoticed. The investigators saw twenty, and a moderate estimate puts them at three times that number. They are mostly Italian, with a few Germans. At one time an attempt was made to stop the girls by refusing to sell them papers, but they were able to obtain them from stands, since that time there has been no further effort to prevent their selling. A little girl who began to sell papers when eleven years old, built up a large trade in the neighborhood of Madison and Halsted streets. For more than two years she sold papers there with great success. She was quick to see the customer, simple and childlike in her replies and gained many friends. At times an older brother came with her to her corner, but generally she came alone. Gradually she lost the simplicity of the early days, she was pert in her answer and brazen in her request. She would saunter into the saloons with the men and drink "pop" with them at the bar, finally her brother saw that she could stand that kind of a life no longer, and she was taken from the street.

A little black-haired Italian girl, who still retains some of the simplicity of childhood, has taken her place. She earns fifty cents a day, and with her three sisters practically supports a crippled father. It is, however, almost criminal for a city to allow a child to be exploited in such a way.

These girls, most of them under thirteen, and some of them only nine or ten years of age, go daily to News Alley to secure their papers. Those who go for the *Daily News* are treated as privileged characters, they are not allowed to stand with the newsboys, but are given their papers in a separate room. At the *American*, on account of lack of space, these papers are distributed from the club and lunch rooms, where the boys and girls obtain their papers from the same window and mingle in the same crowd. The little girls make good sales, they are very persistent and follow a customer until he buys from them. Some earn as much as fifty cents in an afternoon. They do not hesitate to carry their papers into the saloon, in fact they frequent the saloons and are much more welcome there than the boys. The strange incongruity appeals to the frequenters, and it is here they make their most ready sales, but at what cost it is not difficult to determine.

The small boy, the semi-vagrant and the small girl, these three create the problem of the street. If we leave the street without

protection we shall have new problems with each passing year. It is obviously the duty of every American city to face this situation without delay. The conditions in Chicago are no worse than in a multitude of other cities in the East and West. A census of newsboys taken on the streets of Buffalo during the month of March, 1903, which aimed to be representative of the 2,000 newsboys in that city, showed that out of the 328 boys, 273 or 83 per cent. were under fourteen and eighty-four or 25 per cent. were under ten years of age. Out of these eighty-four it was found that three were orphans. There were only eight full orphans and twenty-two half orphans out of the 328 who were examined.

Although the dangers of the street trades are not determined alone by the size of the city, it is nevertheless true that in a city where there are many editions night and morning the chances of abuses are increased many times. New York City has seen this, but has delayed long to seek remedies despite the almost unanimous support of the press. It is a sad commentary on our city civilization that the street child has not been cared for before this. It is difficult for the uninitiated to realize the number of children who are subject to the temptation of a city like New York, or who are lacking in those restraints of home and school which are so necessary for the development of a strong character. The results of this life are repeated almost without the slightest variation. The New York Juvenile Asylum reported, "that out of the 311 boys who had worked at various trades prior to their commitment, 125 or 40 per cent. had been newsboys. Out of this number, eighty had begun between four and twelve years of age." The hospitals, the public schools and the courts all have the same story to tell of diseased bodies, of incapacitated minds and bad morals, the gift of the street to its unrestrained children.

The attempts to remedy this condition have been few in number and rather unsatisfactory in results. In 1902 Boston adopted a system almost identical with that used in Manchester, Liverpool and London, England. The city ordinance of Boston provides that "no minor under the age of fourteen shall, in any street or public place in the city of Boston, work as a bootblack or sell or expose for sale any books, newspapers, pamphlet, fuel, fruit or provisions, unless he has a minor's license." The regulation of 1902 provides, "that the principal of a school or a district in which a minor under four-

teen is a pupil, shall receive the application in duplicate of the parent or guardian of such a minor or of any responsible citizen of Boston, and shall forward the same to the superintendent of schools, accompanied by a certificate of the teacher in whose class the minor may be and the principal of the school stating that they approve the granting of such license to said minor." No minor shall work as a newsboy or as a bootblack unless he is over ten years of age, and shall not sell any other article unless he is over twelve years of age.

The legislature of New York, in April, 1903, amended the labor law relating to children employed in the streets and public places in cities of the first-class (New York and Buffalo). The amendment, "that no male child under ten and no girl under sixteen shall in any city of the first-class sell or expose for sale newspapers in any street or public place. No male child, actually or apparently under fourteen years of age, shall sell or expose for sale unless provided with a permit and a badge." No child to whom such a permit and badge are issued shall sell papers after ten o'clock at night.

These laws are both definite and comprehensive. They mark a welcome advance in preventive legislation. Their enforcement, however, has been a very difficult problem. Many methods have been tried. The Boston law was to be enforced by the board of aldermen. This proved unsatisfactory, and in 1902 a law was passed, transferring the licensing of bootblacks from the board of aldermen to the school board. The committee on newsboys reported in 1903, "that three-quarters of the boys do not obey the law, and its agents on fourteen consecutive days in September, 1903, made observations with the following results: Number of boys not having badges in sight, 140; number having no badges or license, 63; number selling for other boys, 10; number under age, 33; number selling after 8.30 p. m., 117.

As a result of this investigation a special officer was appointed who had special charge of the enforcement of the law. Subsequently considerable progress was made. During the past year there have been sixty-five arrests, all of which except one have been fined. Nine have been arrested for not having their badges in sight. Thirty-seven were unlicensed and ten were arrested for congregating on the street. There have been but four who have been arrested for the second time and two for the third.

The enforcement of the law in New York has been timid and

ineffectual. During the first few days after the law went into effect in September, 1903, the city and the street took it seriously. Then it was discovered that the public schools could not even seat those who had already applied. There was little room for the truant newsboy even if he had been anxious to attend school. The result was a system of half sessions. This was the first excuse. For whenever a boy was found in the morning on the street, he invariably belonged to the afternoon division and vice-versa. The truancy force was too small to enforce the compulsory education law as it should be enforced. The number of violations was constantly increasing and the police were only making sporadic attempts to check the return to old conditions. The result was inevitable, and New York added just one more to the number of her disrespected laws.

In Buffalo the same law had a better effect. The truant officer who distributed the permits for the Board of Education was also a member of the juvenile court, thus assuring the co-operation of the two. The boys whose labor was chiefly affected by the new law worked within well defined limits. One thousand eight hundred and sixty boys applied for permits. A much larger number than was thought to be engaged on the street of that city. These boys received the careful attention of the school authority, as well as the police. The principals of the public schools testify that there was an immediate and continuous decrease in the amount of truancy.

The small boy disappeared almost entirely from the street and the vagrant and truant newsboys were not difficult to detect. Although there may be a few violations of the law in that city, the character of the street trades has materially changed. This is due largely to the fact that the school authorities have taken a hand in the enforcement and have not left it entirely to the police. Even the casual observer who is unfamiliar with the law has seen and commented upon the great change that the law has made in that city.

The laws of Boston or New York are well adapted to the needs of any city, no matter what its size may be. The universal adoption of this law in other American cities would do much to obviate those abuses which are so familiar to the streets of the American cities.

NEWSBOYS OF CHICAGO.²

TABLE I.

AGE AND NATIONALITY.

AGE.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Over 21	Total.	Per cent.
Italian.....	1	3	8	10	20	28	23	33	21	25	13	8	4	4	6	2	.....	2	211	21.1
American.....	2	2	9	12	21	26	36	31	18	13	13	8	6	5	3	.....	3	208	20.8
German.....	180	18
Irish.....	113	11.3
Negro.....	79	7.9
Scandinavian.....	58	5.8
Jewish.....	49	4.9
Polish.....	42	4.2
English.....	15	1.5
Bohemian.....	14	1.4
French.....	8	.8
Canadian.....	6	.6
Greek.....	4	.4
Scotch.....	4	.4
Arabian.....	2	.2
Austrian.....	2	.2
Latvian.....	1	.1
Lithuanian.....	1	.1
Rumanian.....	1	.1
Syrian.....	1	.1
Totals.....	1	5	16	37	68	99	103	178	149	95	67	48	28	46	39	11	2	8	1,000	100

² A study of street trades conditions in Chicago, made under the auspices of the Chicago Settlement Association, Miss Jane Addams, Chairman, September, 1903.

TABLE 2.

PARENTS.

Age.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Over 21	Totals.	Per cent.
Both living.....	1	4	13	32	56	84	85	163	115	81	56	34	13	36	18	8	1	3	803	80.3
Neither dead.....	.....	.....	1	5	10	2	15	8	18	11	4	5	6	4	6	.....	.....	.....	97	7.7
Both dead.....	.....	.....	1	2	.....	.....	.....	7	11	3	6	9	6	.....	13	3	.....	4	74	7.4
Both dead.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	9	.....	.....	5	.....	.....	1	1	6	2	.....	1	1	20	2.0
Totals.....	1	5	16	37	68	99	103	178	149	95	66	49	28	46	39	11	2	8	1,000	100

AVERAGE DAILY EARNINGS.

No. of boys.....	1	5	16	37	68	99	103	178	149	95	66	49	28	46	39	12	2	8	1,000
Total earnings.....	\$0.10	0.76	3.01	7.40	26.13	26.30	32.55	56.87	55.96	52.25	42.37	44.67	18.15	51.30	40.55	18.95	3.50	15.75	490.57
Average earnings...	.10	.15	.19	.20	.38	.27	.31	.32	.30	.55	.64	.90	.65	1.10	1.04	1.58	1.75	1.97	.50

The earnings are given in dollars and cents.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

In school.....	.....	5	13	35	65	92	99	168	120	65	34	26	9	11	9	2	.....	.....	753
Out of school.....	.....	1	3	2	3	7	13	10	20	30	32	23	19	35	30	9	2	.....	247
Totals.....	1	5	16	37	68	99	103	178	149	95	66	49	28	46	39	11	2	8	1,000

WORKING HOURS.

Aggregate hours ...	4	19	62	128	219	304	380	695	617	517	315	285	211	319	284	17	16	71	4,553
No. of boys.....	1	5	16	37	68	99	103	178	149	95	66	49	28	46	39	11	2	8	1,000
Average hours.....	4	4	4	3½	3	3	4	4	4½	5	5	6	8	7	7½	7	8	9	4½